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# In the Know

UNDP Nepal Newsletter

News of the Month

## Providing clean drinking water to economically impoverished urban households

Since January 2008, members of some 584 low income households in Dhalko – an economically impoverished neighbourhood in urban Kathmandu – have been benefiting from access to clean drinking water. This particular endeavour to provide sanitary potable water to the households was undertaken because of the scarce and contaminated water supply in Dhalko. This *Bottled Drinking Water Project in Dhalko (BDWPD)* is a joint undertaking of the UNDP/Public Private Partnership for Urban Environment (PPPUE) Programme, UN-Habitat and the Nepal Water Supply Corporation (now Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited). A local group, *Nepal Podland Youth Organisation* spearheads the efforts. The revenue collected is managed by a local users' committee and is used to sustain the project.

The process of providing clean water starts when 20 litre jars are filled with clean water at the bottling source in Bansbari in northern Kathmandu, a source provided by the Nepal Water Supply Corporation. With the support provided by the PPPUE, these bottles are then sent in small trucks to three distribution points in Dhalko, where community members who are issued identity cards deposit Rs.300 for the bottle (one time deposit) and pay only

Rs.5 for each bottle of water. The market price for a similar jar of water is about fifty rupees. Currently, the water distribution is managed through a Lalitpur based NGO, the Urban Environment Management Society (UEMS) but the distribution process will be gradually handled by the community themselves. The project plans to serve a total of 1,000 households in Dhalko and 400 more households in Teku in the near future.

Phool Maiya Magar, 30, a local user of this service for the last five months says that she and her five-member family are saving time and money besides benefitting from a good service. She praises the quality and good taste of the water. Similarly, 39-year-old Amin Alam whose family has also been using this



water service for the last five months says, "it is a welcome change from the filthy-black tap water that my family and I were forced to use in the past". A mother of two, 32-year-old Rajani Poda says that ever since they started drinking the bottled water, her young children get less sick and no longer suffer from diarrhoea and dysentery.

The BDWPD is in conformity with the National Planning Commission's Three Year Interim Plan's (2007/8 – 2009/10) goal — to provide water supply and sanitation and to improve water quality standards for underserved communities!

# Asia Pacific HDR on Corruption

### “Strong legal actions and commitment needed to tackle Corruption”

Increased level of public awareness, stopping political protection and identifying strong legal actions were some key recommended measures to reduce corruption in Nepal, during a panel discussion organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the launch of the Asia Pacific Human Development Report on Corruption.

Launching the report, Honourable Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokharel stated, “deeper democratic exercises are needed to tackle corruption and there needs to be more focus on building stronger institutions to strengthen the rule of law and take actions to curb cross-border corruption.”

A panel consisting of political parties, Government, Media, Civil Society, Private Sector and Youth identified that lack of coordination between different organisations working in anti-corruption, lack of follow-up and support from the State, lack of strong leadership, lack of transparent mechanisms, a weak judiciary, a culture of promoting impunity, the absence of the rule of law and the lack of implementation of existing laws, international treaties and conventions are key problems for rising corruption in Nepal.

The panelists highlighted that in



Panel discussion facilitated by Pro-public (NGO working on Governance issues) during the launch of the Asia Pacific Human Development Report on Corruption produced by UNDP Regional Centre Colombo

society, corruption takes many forms and originates from many actors at all levels, starting from petty corruption which affects the poorest in particular in the access to essential basic services upto policy corruption. The panel discussed that while civil society needed to remain vigilant at all times, the media should keep reporting and informing the public of the reality. At the same time, the youth focussed on the need to raise awareness about corruption in the public in a much stronger fashion and for a real coordinated effort from all sectors.

The discussion ended with a strong recognition and recommendation that crushing Corruption can only happen if the top leaders of the country proactively drive the agenda and action needs to start right away!

### Ongoing consultations for Nepal HDR 2008



A two-day consultation was organised by the National Planning Commission and UNDP in June to share the draft of the fourth National Human Development Report (NHDR). The NHDR 2008 is on the theme of Inclusive Peace Building. In order to ensure national ownership, several consultations have been held at different stages attended by the policy makers, civil society, private sector, academia and UN organisations. The report is expected to be published in September-October 2008.

### Addressing the petroleum price hike from the hot seat !

The Finance Minister Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat (Nepali Congress) and one of Nepal's leading economists and former Vice-Chairman of the National Planning Commission, Dr. Shankar Sharma were the guests for one of the latest edition of the BBC World Service Trust's discussion programme *Sajha Sawal* (Common Questions) as part of the UNDP's *Participation in Peace and Constitution Building Project*.

In front of an audience of around 80 people, Dr Mahat explained the justification for the increases in fuel prices.

Dr Mahat conceded that prices would almost certainly rise again as Government subsidies are not sustainable in the long term.

Dr. Sharma said that much more investment was required into Nepal's hydro-electric industry to help Nepal to become less reliant on oil.

From a secondary audience of farmers and farm workers in Nawalparasi (West Nepal), the panelists were told how the rise in fuel prices were making it much more difficult for farmers to survive and to make a living. Dr Mahat was asked why there was no subsidized fuel for farmers in a country where 90% of the population works in the farming industry.

A metal worker from Banke (Mid West Nepal) told the panel how



he could no longer make any money from welding as he could no longer afford to buy fuel for his generator and that he had fallen down to the ranks of unemployed people.

Both panelists agreed that it should be a priority for the new Government to provide stable conditions to foster economic growth and that the panel claimed could only be done through consensus politics.

*Sajha Sawal* is broadcast on the BBC Nepali Service and on more than 55 partner FM radio stations every Sunday evening at 9 pm. Radio Nepal broadcasts the Programme every Tuesday morning from 8.15 am. *Sajha Sawal* is shown on Kantipur Television every Wednesday evening at 9 pm.

#### Support to the local media

The UNDP *Participation in Peace and Constitution Building Project* organised a Financial Management Training course in Kathmandu for a group of 21 Local Radio Station Managers and finance staff from 11 FM partner radio stations from the central region. The training provided the participants with the skills required to manage the station finances and accounts in a professional manner. This is the sixth group of participants that have attended the training. A total of 110 station managers and finance staff were trained throughout June.

## Public Private Partnership

### Improved sanitation through Public Private Partnership

Passengers using the Hetauda bus park in recent times have greatly benefited from the availability of a clean and well-maintained public restroom facility. The public toilets have been renovated by a local organisation, Adarsha Tole Bikash Samstha (ATBS) formed under the Public Private Partnership for Urban Environment Programme, funded by UNDP and implemented by the Ministry of Local Development.

Due to poor management by the original contractor, the condition of the Hetauda bus park public toilets built 15 years ago by the Municipality had deteriorated, with litter and rubbish piled up in and around the toilet, creating health hazards as well as an unpleasant sight and smell. When the contract of the local operator expired, the Municipality took over the task of managing the toilets in the year 2002 and enlisted the ATBS to come up with a better way to run the facility under a Public-Private Partnership arrangement.

Within a span of two years, people could see visible changes in the surrounding environment. The ATBS added extra facilities such as showers for the use of long-haul transit passengers and instituted an effective fee collection mechanism. A solar powered lighting system was installed to light the toilets resulting in reduced energy costs. A garden around the toilets was also developed. Due to this improvement of the restroom facilities, the Hetauda bus park toilets began to attract a higher volume of paying customers, resulting in higher revenue. The average daily revenue increased from 350 to 1400 rupees per day.



Garden developed around the public toilets managed by Adarsha Tole Bikas Sanstha



Public toilets managed by Adarsha Tole Bikas Sanstha in Hetauda bus park

Januka Rokka, 33, a toilet cleaner, sees a vast difference in the operation and maintenance of the restrooms. Rokka, who has worked as a toilet cleaner for the past five years describes how the toilets used to be “filthy, stinky, badly lit, a haven for drug abusers, and lacked doors and pans.” She further added, “Now my working condition has improved greatly and with the additional revenue generated and the increase in my pay, I can send my children to school and also save some money for myself. I am happy that the new lighting system has enabled the passengers, especially women to comfortably and safely use the facilities both during the daytime and at night.”

# HIV/AIDS and Mobility

### Updating the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study

Upon the request of the Ministry for Industry, Commerce and Supplies, a Trade Mission (24 June-9 July) under the auspices of *Enhancing Nepal's Trade Related Capacity* project, is currently in Nepal to discuss with the Ministry, trade partners including the private sector and civil society on the update of the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) carried out in 2004.

Based on the analyses of challenges and opportunities for increased competitiveness of existing and potential export sectors as well as diagnosis for overall trade development, the DTIS recommends actions with regard to relevant policies, capacity building and sectoral interventions in the form of a Trade Related Technical Assistance (TRTA) matrix.

The DTIS 2004 has identified six sectors (carpet, garments, tea, agriculture, tourism and hydropower) where Nepal possesses comparative advantage but some of the products such as garment and carpet are currently in question, while some other products such as medicinal herbs, pashmina and ICT have emerged as potential exports from Nepal.

In consultation with the Government, the outcome of the mission will be to have a road-map comprising of the timetable, identification of areas to be covered by the updated trade diagnostic report, institutional arrangements for coordination and implementation of the TRTA involving effective donor-private sector-government partnership.

### HIV/AIDS and Mobility

The SAARC-UNDP-ILO regional workshop, *Leadership and Development Challenges in Addressing HIV/AIDS and Mobility* held in Kathmandu (23-25 June) agreed upon that migration per se is not a risk factor for HIV, rather it is the conditions under which people move that often makes them more vulnerable to HIV. Therefore, there is a need to integrate HIV/AIDS into policies and programmes for migrant workers and their families.

This workshop was initiated in the active leadership of Mr Hassan Shifau, the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Director for Social Affairs. A first of its kind, there were participants from 8 countries including officials from the relevant Ministries, stakeholders from Government, civil society, trade unions and the UN. The workshop concluded that responding to the issues of HIV and mobility is a complex process requiring both regional and national cooperation and action across different sectors such as health and labour.

It was suggested that a *joint HIV and Mobility Initiative* be set up to meet annually, to review the progress, identify the gaps and make recommendations for further action. The Initiative would be organised by the SAARC Secretariat consisting of the SAARC Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS Centre, UNDP and ILO along with the Government, civil society, trade unions, employers, other UN organisations and relevant stakeholders.

### Wishing you both the very best for your future !

### Staff News

Antonio Spinelli is leaving Nepal upon completion of his assignment. He joined in April 2007 to work as an electoral advisor in the UNDP Peace Building and Recovery Unit. He worked within the electoral assistance team of UNMIN to enable the election commission to conduct free and fair elections in the country and also to build the capacity of the election commission in Nepal.

We wish him all the best !



Walter Omondi Otieno, a United Nations Volunteer (UNV) left Nepal to pursue his career in UNDP Sudan. He joined UNDP Nepal in January 2007 as a procurement officer.

We wish him all the best for his future endeavours!

